

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SIG-03 HA-05 IO-14 EUR-12 ARA-14
ACDA-12 AID-05 EB-08 MCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-15 /143 R

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R 160306Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
XMT AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
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TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, MARCH 15, 1978

FOR THE 20 POSTS WHICH ELECTED TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING EXCERPTS VIA CABLE, WE WILL CONTINUE
THE PRACTICE. HOWEVER, TO AVOID DISRUPTING THE HANDLING
OF MORE URGENT TRAFFIC, FUTURE CABLES WILL BE SENT ROUTINE.

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE NOON

BRIEFING, MARCH 15, 1978:

Q: ANYTHING ON THE HORN AT ALL?

A: THE ONLY THING I'D SAY ON THE HORN IS THAT PRESIDENT SIAD HAS TAKEN A DIFFICULT BUT STATESMANLIKE APPROACH IN COMPLETING THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE FORCES FROM THE OGADEN. WE'RE PLEASED AT THE PROMPTNESS WITH WHICH THAT WITHDRAWAL TOOK PLACE.

WE HOPE THAT THE ACTION WILL SOON BE FOLLOWED BY INAUGURATION OF THE PROCESS TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM OF THE OGADEN, INSURE THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF THE REGION, AND TO ALLEVIATE THE IMMEDIATE HUMAN SUFFERING.

WE HOPE TO CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE HORN SO THE RESORT TO WARFARE WILL NO LONGER BE THOUGHT NECESSARY.

IT REMAINS OUR OBJECTIVE TO SEE THE DEPARTURE OF THE MASSIVE SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE FROM THE AREA. NOW THAT THE SOMALI FORCES HAVE WITHDRAWN, WHATEVER UNCLASSIFIED

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RATIONALE THERE MAY HAVE EXISTED FOR THE PRESENCE OF THOSE FORCES IS NO LONGER PRESENT.

Q: I HAVE A DIFFERENT QUESTION. IT GOES TO THE QUESTION OF AN OBSERVER GROUP, PRESUMABLY UNDER OAU AUSPICES, TO MAKE SURE THAT THERE AREN'T REPRISALS IN THE TERRITORY. IS THERE ANY PROGRESS TOWARD THE FORMATION OF SUCH A GROUP?

A: WE OBVIOUSLY CONTINUE TO BE INTERESTED IN SUCH A POSSIBILITY. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING NEW TO OFFER YOU ON THAT SUBJECT AT THIS TIME AS TO PROGRESS.

Q: HAVE WE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE NIGERIANS?

A: YES.

Q: OR ANY OTHER MAJOR OAU PEOPLE SINCE THE WEEKEND?

A: YES.

Q: HODDING, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THE MAGNITUDE OF THE REFUGEE FLOW COMING OUT OF THE OGADEN?

A: NO, I DON'T. I'VE SEEN A WIRE SERVICE REPORT WHICH PUT IT AT A CERTAIN LEVEL OF MAGNITUDE. WE COULD NOT CONFIRM THAT FIGURE.

Q: A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO I THOUGHT IT WAS AFP SAYING A HUNDRED THOUSAND.

A: YES, THAT'S CORRECT; BUT I CAN'T CONFIRM THAT FIGURE. I THINK IT IS PERHAPS LESS THAN THAT, BUT IT IS SUBSTANTIAL.

Q: HODDING, JUST TO GET SOMETHING FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS, UNCLASSIFIED

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AS FAR AS THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS CONCERNED OR THE U.S., THE WAR IN THE OGADEN IS OVER. I MEAN THERE'S NO MORE FIGHTING THERE THAT YOU KNOW OF?

A: TO THE BEST OF OUR INFORMATION THERE IS, TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, NO FIGHTING THERE.

Q: HA

Q: HAVE THERE BEEN ANY ATTACKS ON RETREATING OR FLEEING SOMALI SOLDIERS?

A: INSIDE SOMALIA?

A: NO. INSIDE ETHIOPIA.

A: I DON'T KNOW. I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY REPORTS OF SUCH.

Q: IS THE WITHDRAWAL COMPLETED, AS FAR AS YOU KNOW?

A: YES. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS.

Q: HODDING, YOUR UNDERSTANDING EMCOMPASSES THE INDIGENOUS OGADEN-SOMALI SPEAKING GUERRILLAS?

A: IT'S VERY DIFFICULT FOR ME TO SPEAK TO THAT QUESTION. I DON'T KNOW. ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT BOTH INFORMATION WE'VE RECEIVED AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT ITSELF INDICATES THAT THEIR REGULAR TROOPS ARE OUT. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT GUERRILLAS, FRANKLY. I'M NOT AWARE OF ANY FIGHTING.

Q: HODDING, CAN YOU TELL US ANYTHING ABOUT THE MEETING OF THE AMBASSADOR WITH THE SECRETARY YESTERDAY? UNCLASSIFIED

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A: NO, EXCEPT TO REPEAT WHAT I SAID, IT WAS AT AMBASSADOR ADDOU'S REQUEST. I DON'T KNOW WHERE A QUOTE I SAW CAME FROM, BUT WE WERE NOT IN THE PROCESS OF TELLING HIM ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT HE SHOULD OR SHOULDN'T DO.

Q: IS THE UNITED STATES, AS REPORTED, INCREASING ITS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE OR INCREASING GENERALLY SOME FORM OF AID TO SOMALIA RIGHT NOW?

A: NO. WHEN WE ASKED PRESIDENT SIAD TO WITHDRAW HIS FORCES FROM THE OGADEN, PRESIDENT CARTER TOLD PRESIDENT SIAD THAT IF SUCH A WITHDRAWAL WERE EFFECTED WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO COMMENCE CONSULTATIONS WITH CONGRESS TO SEEK AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE SOMALIA WITH SOME DEFENSIVE MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES AND DISCUSS WITH OTHER NATIONS THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR ALSO SUPPLYING THE SAME KIND OF SUPPORT.

IT WOULD AND SHOULD BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT SUCH DEFENSIVE EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES WOULD BE LIMITED TO THE TYPE AND QUANTITY SUITABLE FOR DEFENDING SOMALIA'S INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED BORDERS.

PRESIDENT CARTER ALSO TOLD PRESIDENT SIAD THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO ASK THE CONGRESS FOR ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA AFTER A SOMALI WITHDRAWAL.

AS A PART OF THAT EFFORT, THE UNITED STATES -- WHICH IS TO SAY THE ADMINISTRATION -- IS PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE TO EFFORTS WHICH MIGHT BE ORGANIZED TO BRING ABOUT THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF THE WAR-RAVAGED OGADEN.

WE HAVE BEGUN TO CONSULT WITH CONGRESS. I THINK I'VE IN FACT SEEN SOME STORIES TO THAT EFFECT. BUT IN ANY CASE WE HAVEN'T BEGUN TO CONSULT WITH CONGRESS ON OUR UNCLASSIFIED

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PLANS FOR POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE AND WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF SEEKING TO DETERMINE WHAT SOMALI'S NEEDS MIGHT BE.

Q: YOU ALSO REFERRED THERE TO EFFORTS TO BRING

ABOUT THE RECOVERY OF THE WAR-RAVAGED OGADEN, WHICH OBVIOUSLY REFERS TO U.S. RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA. HAS ANYTHING BEEN INITIATED IN THAT RESPECT SO FAR?

A: I'M NOT AWARE OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS. LET ME TAKE THE QUESTION GENERALLY AS TO WHETHER WE'VE DONE THIS. I'M TALKING, OF COURSE, OF SUCH IMMEDIATELY PRESSING MATTERS AS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO PEOPLE IN THE REGION WHO MAY HAVE BEEN DISPLACED AND THAT IMMEDIATE SORT OF ASSISTANCE; AND BEYOND THAT I'M NOT TOO SURE.

Q: DOES THE UNITED STATES KNOW DIPLOMATICALLY IF THE MEDIATION EFFORTS OF NIGERIA THAT'S GOING TO BE IN A MEETING IN LAGOS TOMORROW ARE TO BE MET BY THE SOMALI AND ETHIOPIAN

PRESENCE THERE?

A: ON BACKGROUND, I FIND THAT WE HAVE INFORMATION THAT INDICATES IT'S VERY DOUBTFUL THAT ETHIOPIA WOULD ATTEND SUCH A MEETING.

Q: NOW, IN THE AID DISCUSSIONS WITH CONGRESS, DID THE ADMINISTRATION PROPOSE A SPECIFIC AMOUNT THAT IT IS SEEKING FROM CONGRESS AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME?

A: I DON'T THINK SO, MURREY; AND I DON'T HAVE SUCH A FIGURE. I THINK REALLY THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE TO DISCUSS WITH THE SOMALIS FIRST, AMONG OTHER THINGS.
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Q: HODDING, THE PRESIDENT, VERY PUBLICLY AND VERY SPECIFICALLY, PUT IN A KEY-IN CLAUSE IN OUR WILLINGNESS TO HELP OUT THE SOMALIS AND YOU DIDN'T MENTION IT. HAVE THEY ASSURED US THAT THEY DON'T PLAN TO GO INTO KENYA?

A: THEY HAVE OBVIOUSLY SAID THAT THEY HAVE NO DESIGNS ON KENYA, BUT WAIT. WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS THAT CONSULTATION BEGAN ON THE GENERAL PROPOSITION THAT IF THERE IS THIS KIND OF WITHDRAWAL AND IF THERE IS RESPECT FOR THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY FOR THE NATIONS IN THE REGION AND THE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED BORDERS, WHAT WOULD CONGRESS THINK ABOUT PROVIDING DEFENSIVE ARMS AND SOME ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE?

NOW WE'RE IN THE PROCESS OF ALSO CARRYING FORWARD THAT KIND OF DISCUSSION IN A MORE CONCRETE WAY WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA.

Q: I WOULD DIRECT YOU BACK TO THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS. HE DIDN'T SAY WHAT YOU JUST SAID. HE SAID THAT ONCE THOSE TWO THINGS WERE DONE, THEN YOU WOULD START CONSULTING

WITH CONGRESS.

A: WE ARE IN THE POSITION BECAUSE WE HAVE ALREADY DONE SO TO MEET THE OBJECTIVES THAT THE PRESIDENT LAID DOWN.

Q: HODDING, THIS MISSION THAT MAY GO TO SOMALIA -- HOW DOES IT FIT INTO THIS WHOLE THING?

A: ON BACKGROUND, WE ARE DISCUSSING WITH THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT THE POSSIBILITY OF A SPECIAL EMISSARY COMING THERE; AND, FRANKLY, WE CAN'T CONFIRM THAT SUCH EMISSARY WILL BE SENT UNTIL WE HAVE THEIR ANSWER. IF WE DO SEND ONE, IT WILL BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE.
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Q: I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO THE CONDITIONS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER SET. IF I RECALL, HE SPECIFICALLY SAID THAT SOMALIA HAD TO RENOUNCE ITS DESIGNS ON THE TERRITORIES IN ETHIOPIA AND KENYA WHICH THEY HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED BELONG RIGHTFULLY TO THEM. I HAVE NOT SEEN ANY INDICATION THAT THE SOMALIS HAVE PUBLICLY RENOUNCED THOSE CLAIMS. DO THEY HAVE --

A: WAIT A MINUTE, DID HE SAY "PUBLICLY RENOUNCE"?

Q: HE JUST SAID 'RENOUNCE.'

A: ALL RIGHT. I'M JUST SAYING TO YOU THAT WE WILL PROCEED WITH CONSULTATIONS WITH THEM ON THE SUBJECT, AND I AM IN NO WAY CONTRADICTING THE PRESIDENT.

Q: MUST THEY STILL RENOUNCE THOSE CLAIMS --

A: YES, THEY DO HAVE TO RENOUNCE IT. I'M SIMPLY GOING TO TELL YOU WE'RE GOING FORWARD WITH OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH THEM.

Q: WHEN YOU SAY YOU'RE NOW IN A POSITION TO GO FORWARD WITH THOSE TALKS, THE IMPLICATION IS CLEAR THAT THE SOMALIS HAVE GIVEN YOU AN ASSURANCE -- AT LEAST IN PRIVATE -- THAT THEY HAVE RENOUNCED THEIR CLAIMS AGAINST KENYA.

A: I DON'T DRAW ANY IMPLICATIONS FOR YOU.

Q: THERE ARE REPORTS THAT CUBAN MILITARY -- MORE IS MOVING INTO MOZAMBIQUE. NOW, IN THE EVENT THAT THE CUBANS DO MASS TROOPS IN MOZAMBIQUE AND THE SOVIET ADVISERS FOLLOW THEM AND SO FORTH AND AN ATTACK IS LAUNCHED AND BISHOP MUZOREWA AND THE REVEREND NDABANINGI SITHOLE ASK, ALONG WITH SMITH, UNCLASSIFIED

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IN THIS INTERIM GOVERNMENT, FOR SOME DEFENSIVE MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, WOULD THE EMBARGO STILL APPLY AND WOULD WE PERMIT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO OVERRUN THE SMITH-

SITHOLE-MUZOREWA GOVERNMENT?

A: LES, THE QUESTION DOESN'T ARISE. IT IS A VERY SPECULATIVE QUESTION.

Q: YES. COULD I FOLLOW THIS JUST BY ASKING: IS THERE STILL AN EMBARGO GIVEN THIS? THE EMBARGO HAS NOT BEEN REMOVED?

A: NO, IT HASN'T, LES.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING NEW ON THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET TROOPS

AND CUBAN TROOPS OR ASSURANCES FROM CUBA OR THE SOVIET
UNION ABOUT WITHDRAWALS --

A: NO.

Q: BEYOND WHAT WAS SAID FRIDAY.

A: NO. VANCE

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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